

NCC Roots Class-Experiencing God Session #7 October 14, 2020

Led by Terry Cooper

Session/Week #7...The Crisis of Belief

Day #1...A Turning Point

- When God invites you to join Him in His work, He has a God-sized assignment for you. You will quickly realize you cannot do what He is asking on your own. If God doesn't help you, you will fail. This is the crisis of belief when you must decide whether to believe God for what He wants to do through you. At this point many people decide to not follow what they sense God is leading them to do. Then they wonder why they do not experience God's presence and activity the way other Christians do.
- **Crisis** comes from the Greek word that means *decision* or *judgment*. This is not a calamity in your life but a turning point where **you must make a decision**. You must decide what you truly believe about God in this moment. The way you respond to this crisis moment will determine whether you become involved with God in something God-sized or not.
- This is a monumental turning point in your life. To miss this could possibly mean that you miss what God had planned for you.
- To accept this God-sized assignment by faith in the midst of this crisis does NOT mean it will never happen again. In fact, this might be a steppingstone to another crisis moment in your future.
- This session reveals much of how God worked through Ninevah Church over the past 20 years. I can tell you that we (NCC) have had many crisis of belief moments over the past 20 years.
- The crisis moment is actually the point where we must decide...it cannot be ignored or put off. The Word from God is clear and our response is about to reveal our faith or lack of faith. These examples of "crisis moments" are found throughout the Scriptures.
- Joshua...walk around Jericho and blow a horn.
- Gideon...get rid of that vast army and take lamps, jars and 300 men into battle.
- David...God changed the tactic from the first battle to the next battle so David wouldn't rely methods vs. relationship.

1 Chronicles 14:8-16 (NLT2)

⁸ When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, they mobilized all their forces to capture him. But David was told they were coming, so he marched out to meet them. ⁹ The Philistines arrived and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁰ **So David asked God, "Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" The LORD replied, "Yes, go ahead. I will hand them over to you."** ¹¹ So David and his troops went up to Baal-perazim and defeated the Philistines there. "God did it!" David exclaimed. "He used me to burst through my enemies like a raging flood!" So they named that place Baal-perazim (which means "the Lord who bursts through"). ¹² The Philistines had abandoned their gods there, so David gave orders to burn them. ¹³ But after a while **the Philistines returned and raided the valley again.** ¹⁴ And once again David asked God what to do. **"Do not attack them straight on,"** God replied. "Instead, circle around behind and attack them near the poplar trees.

¹⁵ When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the poplar trees, go out and attack! That will

be the signal that God is moving ahead of you to strike down the Philistine army.”¹⁶ So David did what God commanded, and they struck down the Philistine army all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

- Do not put your trust in methods or past experiences. Put your trust in God’s relationship of love.
- Peter...Peter was a fisherman, but Jesus gave him his first experience to catch a fish with a coin in his mouth.
- All of these examples are crisis moments. They presented a calling that could NOT be accomplished by human power, technique or method.

The Crisis of Belief

- An encounter with God requires faith.
- Encounters with God are God-sized.
- What you do in response to God’s revelation/invitation reveals what you believe about God.
- True faith requires action.
- This is how I responded to that summary question for day one.
- King David lived in close fellowship with God. **Not depending on yesterday’s plan.** Each day brought new revelation.

Day #2...Encounters with God Require Faith

- When God speaks, your response requires faith.

Hebrews 11:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Now faith is being **sure** of what we hope for and **certain** of what we do not see.

² This is what the ancients were commended for.

- The crisis reveals whether or not you are truly sure and certain.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NLT2)

⁷ For we live **by believing** and not by seeing.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV)

⁷ We live **by faith**, not by sight.

- It’s a crisis because **you** can’t do it...if **you** could do it...it wouldn’t be a crisis.
- The crisis is not the calling, the crisis is your faith...is it real or false?

John 14:12 (NIV)

¹² I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

- We hear people say...that person has a great faith, but how much faith is really necessary to experience God’s calling?

Matthew 17:20 (NIV)

²⁰ He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a

mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

- This crisis moment is also a very dangerous moment before God. We are saved by faith and the crisis is revealing the legitimacy of our faith or not.

Ephesians 2:4-10 (NIV)

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith**--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**

- Can you see the connection of faith to good works? Your faith does not rest on a concept or an idea. Faith must be in a Person-God-Christ.
- Faith is NOT you drawing up some great big plan and carrying it out as an offering to God. That plan would only bring honor and attention to you. You didn't get that plan from God and you didn't need God to complete it either. I'm afraid that this is the strategy of many churches today.
- Moses would have never developed such a crazy plan and Moses was unable to fulfill God's plan unless God went in front of him. The same is true for Joshua and the disciples in the time of Jesus.
- The plans of God are too big for mere men to carry out. But when God calls you...you must answer with "Yes Lord". That is the only acceptable answer of faith to God.
- **But what if you don't?** What if you say you're a Christian, but you do not obey the calling of God in that crisis of belief moment?

Luke 6:46-49 (NIV)

⁴⁶ "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and **do not do what I say?** ⁴⁷ I will show you what he is like who comes to me and **hears my words and puts them into practice.** ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who **hears my words and does not put them into practice** is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its **destruction was complete.**"

- When I read that statement of Jesus, I had a flash back to when I left my secular job and went to NCC. Someone asked me...aren't you afraid? My answer was YES, but I'm more afraid of failing God than I am of failing my family.
- Do you know something that's spiritually frightening? There are only three places in the Scriptures where Jesus uses the word "Lord-Lord" back to back. Lord means Master. You've just read one of them. Here are the other two and they both have the same application...failing to exercise their faith by obedience.

Matthew 7:21-23 (NIV)

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, '**Lord, Lord,**' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **only he who does the will of my Father** who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'

²³ Then I will tell them plainly, '**I never knew you.** Away from me, you evildoers!'

Away from me, I never knew you...those all describe the lack of a relationship with God.

Matthew 25:10-13 (NLT2)

¹⁰ "But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. ¹¹ Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, '**Lord! Lord!** Open the door for us!' ¹² "But he called back, 'Believe me, **I don't know you!**' ¹³ "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

- There can be no substitute for a personal relationship...to know God. This is eternal life.

John 17:3 (NIV)

³ Now **this is eternal life**: that they may **know you**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

- By the way, that calling of God in that last one was simply...KEEP WATCH! That will also require a God-sized faith.
- Obedience indicates faith in God. Disobedience reveals a lack of faith in God.
- This is what I wrote in my summary statement for day 2. Why do you call me Lord, Lord and refuse to do what I say?

Day #3...Encounters with God are God-Sized

- God is interested in the world coming **to know Him**. The only way people will know what God is like is to see Him at work in their world. They will know His nature when they see it expressed in His activity. Whenever God involves you in His activity, the assignment will have Godlike dimensions to it.
- Some people would say...God would never ask me to do something impossible. Actually, that's not true. Most everything God asked you to do will be impossible for you. It will only be accomplished as you join Him to accomplish it.
- Do you think it would be possible for Abraham to have a son at the age of 100 without God?
- Do you think it would be possible for Moses to walk into Pharaoh and set 2 million Israelites free from 400 years of slavery without God?
- Do you think it would be possible for fisherman, a tax collector and a rebellious Pharisee to carry the gospel of Christ to the 4 corners of the earth without God?
- The truth is this...If we could do it in our power...then we would be the ones to get the glory and honor.
- When we carry out the God-sized calling of God...He will always be the One that get's the credit and glory.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NIV)

²⁶ Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But **God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.**

²⁸ He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that **no one may boast before him.**

- This is what I wrote for my summary statement on day 3. God is far more concerned with me walking with Him than He is interested in me getting a job done for Him.

Day #4...What You Do Reveals What You Believe

- Think about day 4's title for a moment.
- When God speaks to a person, revealing His plans and purposes, it will always cause a crisis of belief. What you do reveals what you believe about God, regardless of what you say. When God reveals what He is purposing to do, you face a crisis-a decision time. God and the world can tell from your response what you really believe about God. Your trust in God will determine what you do and how you live.

1 Samuel 17:37 (NIV) Young David wanting to fight Goliath

³⁷ The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."

- David was convinced that God had been preparing him for this very moment, this crisis of belief. David had heard the Word of God and David actually believed it. God had the prophet Samuel anoint David before this event ever occurred. God was preparing David for this crisis moment. David was deciding what he believed to be true about God.
- Another example is Abraham and Sarah. There was a 25-year gap between the promise of God for a son and the actual birth of that son (Isaac). **God's Word, His promise came Abraham before the crisis of faith.**

Genesis 15:4 (NIV)

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir."

- The Word of God was clear. Faith reveals what you really believe at God's Word. Sarah became impatient and took matters into her own hands...her effort to help God complete His divine promise. Sarah gave her servant girl to Abraham as a wife and they bore a son named Ishmael. This is what happens when we try to demonstrate our faith **by using our way**, instead of trusting in God's way.
- Sarah's actions revealed a lack of faith. She did not believe God was going to keep His promise.
- Let's take a modern-day example from the study: Bill and Kathy having just heard a missionary speaker, believe God wants them to go as missionaries to Africa. Kathy reminds Bill that her parents would never agree to let them move so far away with her parent's only grandchildren. They decide not to pursue that sense of calling to be missionaries but to seek to support missions where they live. What do you think Bill and Kathy believe about God?

- It's easier to look at the Sarah situation and see the lack of faith than the "Bill and Kathy" one. The Bill and Kathy example is too real to be comfortable.
- This is what I wrote for my summary statement for day #4: God and the world can tell from my response what I really believe about God.

Day #5...True Faith Requires Action

James 2:26 (NIV)

²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

- Does genuine faith, followed by a genuine following of God's call always bring good results **in this life**? No! Hebrews chapter 11 reveals the truth about faith, obedience and the results. Hebrews reveals **the good and the bad results** of following God. Let there be no mistake tonight. Faith produced both of these groups:
- **Good News...**Routed enemies, overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fire, escaped death, weakness was turned to strength, people became strong in battle, armies fled and families were restored.
- **Bad News...**Tortured, jeered at, flogged, prisoned, stoned to death, sawed in half, killed by sword, destitute, oppressed, mistreated, hid in caves.
- Did you notice that I specifically described these good news and bad news as "**in this life**"? This is where some people get in trouble. They measure everything by "**this life**" and forget about the "**life to come**".

Hebrews 11:38-40 (NIV)

They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.

⁴⁰ God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

- That's it! That is the ultimate message of faith. **God has promised something better for us!** But that promise is meaningless to those who don't truly believe it. It's called faith. Do you know what the very next verse in Hebrews says (after the sawed in two section)?

Hebrews 12:2-3 (NIV)

² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ **Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

- If all I can see is now...**this present life**, I will never be able to **live by faith**. Looking only at the now is **living by sight**. They do not produce the same kind of life. If I had to live by sight only, I would have already become weary. But if I live by faith, I have all the promises of God directly in front of me while I'm fighting these earthly giants.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV) ⁷ We live by faith, not by sight.

- Verse 3 was my summary to this final day 5 assignment. **Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**